

**Saint Paul Planning Commission  
City Hall Conference Center  
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

**Minutes June 1, 2007**

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, June 1, 2007, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners Present:** Mmes. Donnelly-Cohen, Faricy, Lu, McCall, Morton, Smitten, Wencil and; Messrs. Bellus, Commers, Gordon, Johnson, Kramer, Nelson, Rosemark, and Spaulding.

**Commissioners Absent:** Ms. \*Porter, and Messrs. \*Alton, \*Barrera, Cudahy, Goodlow, \*Margulies.  
\*Excused

**Also Present:** Larry Soderholm, Planning Administrator; Lucy Thompson, Donna Drummond, Patricia James, Shawntera Hardy, Andrew Jacobson, Jacob Rife, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

**I. Approval of minutes May 18, 2007.**

***MOTION: Commissioner Bellus moved approval of the minutes of May 18, 2007. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

**II. Chair's Announcements**

Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen, who is the Commission's first vice chair, chaired the meeting. She had no announcements.

**III. Planning Administrator's Announcements**

Larry Soderholm reported on planning-related business at the City Council for last week and their agenda for next week. Mr. Soderholm passed out the list of current committee assignments and asked members to get in touch with him or Chair Alton if they have any questions or would like any changes. He also passed out updated Commission membership lists.

**IV. Zoning Committee**

**NEW BUSINESS**

#07-074-844 Sprint/Nextel – Conditional use permit for cellular telephone antenna on a monopole. 615 Drake Street, between Shepard and Tuscarora. (Sarah Zorn, 651/266-6570)

*Commissioner Morton reported that the applicant has requested this be laid over to the June 21, 2007 Zoning Committee meeting.*

#07-075-223 City House Interpretive Center – Re-establishment of nonconforming use as a restaurant and interpretive center, and variance to permit cost of alterations to exceed 50% of market value. 258 Mill Street, between Chestnut and Walnut. (Patricia James, 651/266-6639)

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee’s recommendation to approve the re-establishment of nonconforming use permit and variance. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#07-074-940 Teresa Deming – Rezoning from R4 One Family Residential to RT2 Townhouse Residential. 1539-1541 Lincoln Avenue, between Saratoga and Snelling. (Patricia James, 651/266-6639)

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee’s recommendation to approve the rezoning.*

Commissioner Bellus questioned the committee decision that this wasn’t a spot zoning.

Commissioner Gordon said the staff report stated that it could be spot zoning, not that it was, and the Zoning Committee concluded that it wasn’t. A spot zoning has to dramatically reduce the value of the surrounding properties; the Zoning Committee’s conclusion was that this did not have that affect. In fact it probably improved the value.

Commissioner Kramer added that the committee looked at the existing make-up of the block, which included RM2-zoned property and OS-zoned property. This is not a pure spot zoning situation.

Commissioner Bellus said that it appears that the RM2 and OS zoning fronted Grand Avenue, which is a commercial street and that the side of the block this property is on is residential.

Commissioner Kramer stated that the existing use is nonconforming and it is a legal duplex.

Commissioner Nelson stated his concerns about the rezoning and the variance request. He didn’t believe the parking spaces were adequate. There is a two car garage and about 27 feet from the garage face to the next property. In order to have maneuvering space to get into the garage, there is not enough space for even a compact car. He also questioned the set backs for the building, and stated that he was against both of the requests.

Commissioner Spaulding stated that he had to question the Zoning Committee’s treatment of the second condition. One of the issues that the neighborhood has dealt with is the presence of colleges and conversion of homes to rental properties.

Commissioner Kramer said that the Zoning Committee did spend some time on that issue. What compelled him to support the applicant was that not only does the daughter of the applicant live in the basement apartment, but the owners of the property are intending to move into the upper unit of the property. They have agreed to the condition that one of the units be owner occupied.

Commissioner Bellus stated that he agrees with the staff's position that this is purely for economic reasons and therefore should not be approved.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** *The motion to recommend approval of the rezoning passed on a vote of 11-4 (Bellus, Nelson, Spaulding, Rosemark)*

#07-075-036 Teresa Deming – Variance of lot area for triplex. 1539-1541 Lincoln Avenue, between Saratoga and Snelling. (Patricia James, 651/266-6639)

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variance.*

Commissioner Nelson wondered whether additional variances shouldn't be required in addition to lot area. He felt the property as a three-plex would be out of compliance with the zoning code on at least two other standards—side yards and parking.

Patricia James, PED staff, responded that retroactive variances for the new zoning district have not been required for already constructed buildings. The planning commission has established guidelines for these types of cases, which staff followed. The guidelines look at the impact of the use on the property and, for rezoning, the guidelines look at lot area but not at setbacks.

Commissioner Nelson said he is also concerned with the implications of this occurring across the alley from every mixed use commercial corridor in the city.

After more discussion, Commissioner Bellus request a roll call vote.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** *The motion to approve the variance carried on a roll call vote of 14-1 (Nelson).*

#07-065-669 Margaret Schmidt – Establishment of legal nonconforming use status as a triplex. 799 Oakdale Avenue, between Belvidere and Winona. (Patricia James, 651/266-6639)

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the establishment of legal nonconforming use. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#07-074-777 William Foussard – Establishment of legal nonconforming use status as a triplex. 432 Lexington Parkway S., between Palace and James. (Sarah Zorn, 651/266-6570)

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the establishment of legal nonconforming use. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#07-022-733 Home Depot – Site plan review for a new Home Depot store and parking. 395 Pascal Street North. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

*Commissioner Morton reported that the applicant has requested this be laid over to the June 21, 2007 Zoning Committee meeting.*

## **V. Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee**

Chair McCall announced that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 6, 2007.

Invest Saint Paul - Guest presentation by Stacey Millett of the Mayor's Office, Director of *Invest Saint Paul*. Mr. Soderholm announced that Ms. Millett had to be out of town and he will reschedule her presentation.

## **VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee**

Central Corridor Development Strategy – Release plan for public hearing and set hearing date on July 13, 2007. (*Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556; Lucy Thompson, 651/266-6578*)

Donna Drummond and Lucy Thompson, PED staff, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the *Central Corridor Development Strategy*, which is recommended by the two Central Corridor citizen task forces, one for University Avenue and the other for the Capitol/Downtown area. The plan is proposed as a chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. It presents a vision and set of strategies for how University Avenue, the Capitol area, and downtown should grow and change over the next 25-30 years in response to the planned investment in light rail transit (LRT). The document is based on the premise that LRT in the Central Corridor is a tremendous opportunity not only to improve transit service but to revitalize the neighborhoods along the line. The *Development Strategy* contains information on how the corridor functions today; a vision statement and six principles to guide investment in the corridor; a set of objectives and strategies for each principle; 90 proposed development initiatives, ranging from small area plans to new mixed-use urban villages; design guidelines for new public spaces; a delineation of areas for change, where zoning and investment incentives should encourage redevelopment; six development typologies to guide the design and density of various infill sites; design and development concepts for the downtown; guidelines for station design; and proposals for new regulatory tools to facilitate and manage the desired improvements that LRT will bring to the entire Corridor.

Questions and discussion followed.

**MOTION:** *On behalf of the Comprehensive Planning Committee Commissioner Morton moved to release the plan for public review and set a public hearing on July 13, 2007. Commissioner Bellus seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

## **VII. Communications Committee**

None

## **VIII. Task Force Reports**

Commissioner Rosemark announced the Ford Site Task Force's next meeting is on Monday, June 4, 2007, at Lumen Christi Catholic Church. On Tuesday, June 5, 2007, they will have an open house from noon to 3:00 at the Hillcrest Recreation Center and from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Kate's Jeanne D'Arc Auditorium.

Commissioner Gordon announced the STAR Board Large Loan and Grant applications are due today

by 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Kramer reported that the Land Use Task Force met on Wednesday, May 30 and discussed livability issues, including sustainability, parking, and design guidelines.

Commissioner Commers announced that the Transportation Comprehensive Plan Task Force will meet on Tuesday, June 12, 2007. They will hear from Russ Stark about the Bicycle Advisory Board, and how bicycling fits into the update of the chapter.

**IX. Old Business**

None

**X. New Business**

None

**XI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by  
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary  
Planning and Economic Development Department,  
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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Larry Soderholm, AICP  
Planning Administrator

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Marilyn Porter  
Secretary of the Planning Commission